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SENATOR CROSBY: Senator Preister.

SENATOR PREISTER: Thank you, Honorable President, friends all, LB 830, the last bill to be shelled out this session, is torpidly referred to as the turtle bill. This bill has been crawling along for three years along bill boards, newspapers and Christmas trees to finally get here today. It has not been on the fast track. I may be sticking my neck out introducing this bill but, hopefully, I won't end up in the soup. LB 830 prevents the commercial exploitation of amphibians and reptiles native to Nebraska. It is supported by a number of Nebraskans, including Dr. Lee Simmons, the Director of the Henry Doorley Zoo; Dr. Maxine Sorenson, Principal of Sheridan School in Lincoln; Dr. Dick Spearman, Principal of Maude Rousseau School in Lincoln, and the teachers there; Dr. John Lynch, the UNL Herbitologist and author; Dr. John Johnsgard at UNL; Dr. John Janovy, UNL Professor of Biology, and the list goes on and on. If there is anyone here in the south balcony who also supports this turtle protection bill, will you please stand and raise your hand. Thank you. The five states surrounding Nebraska and most others have laws protecting their amphibians and reptiles. With no protection, Nebraska is painted as ripe for wholesale traders. Marty Stauffer, on his TV show, Wild America, stated the most serious threat to turtles comes from harvesting them for the pet trade. The New York Turtle and Tortoise Society recently received a letter from Europe stating, since June of 1992 I have noticed that thousands of terrapin tortoises have been entering my country, Spain, to be sold as pets. Because our local species are now banned from the pet trade, these attractive terrapin turtles are selling quickly. Although hundreds, maybe thousands are being sold here, the death rate must be very high because almost nobody knows how to take care of them. An editor's note following the letter mentions there has been mounting evidence over the years of increased exploitation of North American box turtles for the European pet trade. Our turtles sell in Europe and in this country for between 30 and 100 dollars each, which is a real greening of some bank accounts. If we stop hibernating, this shell game can be slowed. I would like to mention that I would like to dedicate this bill to the students of Maude Rousseau School and also to Amy Byorth, Angie Byorth who has been working diligently over the years, not only on this turtle bill but out of concern for the children in the community as well as for all forms of